''Snow syrup,'' says Teter, her eyes sparkling at the recollection. ''Nothing like it.''

Such was the flavor of her youth on this 10-acre plot—simple, ineffable pleasures. With an extended family that she estimates includes ''about 50 cousins,'' she'd swim and canoe and skate on the pond. She'd skateboard on a homemade ramp. She'd play volleyball at the net that stood in the side yard. She'd jump from an upstairs bedroom window onto a trampoline in front of the house—when her parents were away, of course. And after she became a globetrotting snowboarding prodigy, following her apprenticeship at the local ski area, Okemo Mountain, she'd miss all that.

''Not being here for maple syrup season,'' says Teter, ''is like missing Christmas.''

Now she's trying to turn maple syrup season into Christmas.

''I wondered where the money would help the most,'' says Teter. ''I thought of Africa. I read up all I could on it. I read about the AIDS and the hunger and I thought this would be the best place to start.''

''Start'' is the operative word. Hannah's Gold has raised only about $5,000 so far, but it was launched just a couple of months ago, and Teter's grasp is of a much grander scale. She'll appear on Jimmy Kimmel's late-night TV show Dec. 15 to promote Hannah's Gold. She has agreements from Okemo and Burton Snowboards to donate $1 each per bottle of Hannah's Gold sold.

This is only the ground floor, anyway. Teter now lives in the limelight; she's based in South Lake Tahoe, Calif., but most of the time she's ordering room service on a transcontinental whirlwind on behalf of sponsors Motorola, Burton, and Mountain Dew. ''They keep me pretty busy,'' she says.

But she wants to do the majority of her cashing in for charity.

''People know me as a snowboarder,'' she says, ''but I want to branch out to different avenues, really reach out and raise money. Hannah's Gold is the first step. I plan to do more, keep building.'' The ideas are like mountain snow right now, more kinetic rush than specifically targeted, but even as a novice fund-raiser, Teter intends to be more than a mouthpiece.

''I plan to go over to Africa soon to see where and how the money is being spent,'' she says. ''I don't just want to lend my name to these projects.''

No matter how modest a start her altruism is off to, Teter won't be shortchanged on enthusiasm and optimism.

''Hannah's Gold has only been out so long,'' she says. ''It's really flying. It's going uphill, the way I go in snowboarding. I hope it goes with me. No, I know it will.''

A TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY J. ZAGAMI

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on January 3, 2007, a longtime employee of the Congress and the Legislative Branch will retire from public service. After 40 years of service, Anthony J. ''Tony'' Zagami will depart as the longest serving general counsel in the history of the U.S. Government Printing Office.

Tony Zagami began his career as a young Senate Page in the mid-1960s. I first met him during my first term in the Senate representing the citizens of Vermont. At that time, Tony was working in the Senate Democratic cloakroom while completing law school. He spent a total of 25 years in various positions on Capitol Hill before leaving in 1990 to become the general counsel for GPO, the agency responsible for printing and distributing the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and almost all other Government publications.

Years ago, my wife Marcelle and I invited Tony over for an evening at our house in McLean. Also joining us was Henry Chapin, who gave us a performance that showed us why he is known as a great balladeer. I will always remember that night of music, laughter, and friends fondly.

Throughout his career both here on the Hill and later with GPO, Tony was known for his dedication and hard work on behalf of the American people. He leaves with a lengthy and very distinguished record of public service. I thank my friend Tony Zagami for that service, and Marcelle and I wish him well as he departs to begin a new chapter in his life.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, at the end of the year, a longtime public servant who is a former congressional staff member will retire after 40 years of distinguished Government service to the Nation. Since 1990, Anthony J. Zagami has been general counsel of the Government Printing Office, the longest serving general counsel in the agency's history, and I welcome this opportunity to commend him for his long and outstanding career.

Tony has been general counsel at GPO for the past 16 years. Before that, he had worked ably with us in a variety of positions in the Senate. I first met him in the 1970s, when he was an impressive young aide in our Senate Democratic cloakroom.

At the time, Tony was also earning his law degree from George Mason University School of Law in Arlington, and his strong commitment to public service impressed us all.

He later became general counsel of the Congressional Joint Committee on Printing, our oversight committee for GPO, and he served there for 9 years. When he moved to GPO in 1990, Tony became an essential part of the ongoing effort to guide the agency in the digital age.

I have enjoyed working with Tony very much over the years, and I have always had great respect for his ability and dedication. On the occasion of his retirement, I thank Tony for all he has done so well, and I extend my best wishes to him and to his family for the years ahead.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS ROBERT LEE ''BOBBY'' HOLLAR, JR. POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to SFC Robert Lee ''Bobby'' Hollar, Jr. Sergeant First Class Hollar was an exemplary soldier, respected U.S. Postal employee, and a loving family man.

Before deploying for Iraq, Sergeant First Class Hollar dropped by Crescent Elementary School in Griffin, GA, to visit a class of students. In the classroom, Sergeant First Class Hollar fielded questions about where he was headed, what he would be doing there, and when he would be coming home. He encouraged the students to write and promised he would do the same.

On September 1, 2005, on a road south of Baghdad, an IED ended the life of Sergeant First Class Hollar. As word of his death reached the classroom where he had stood just months before, the children began to cry. You see, Sergeant First Class Hollar taught them something else: he taught them that our freedom is not free.

This week, the Senate passed S. 4050, a bill naming the post office in Thomaston, GA, as the Sergeant First Class Robert Lee ''Bobby'' Hollar, Jr. Post Office Building. For the children at Crescent Elementary School, this building will serve as a lasting memory of their pen pal and hero. For the rest of us, this building will serve as a reminder that our freedom is not free.

In closing, I would like to thank the numerous people in Georgia who helped to make this possible as well as the U.S. Postal Service and my fellow Senators.

INDIAN TRUST REFORM ACT

● Mr. MCCAIN: Mr. President, as chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, I rise today to speak in vigorous support of S.1439, the Indian Trust Reform Act of 2005, a bill I introduced in July 2005, with Senator DORGAN as an original co-sponsor, to address a broad range of Indian trust asset issues and trust management policies and practices. As introduced, this bill was intended only as a starting point for an extended dialogue with interested parties in Indian country and in the Government that would lead us, eventually, to legislation that brings real and lasting improvements in the way Indian trust assets are managed and that resolves the 10-year old class action lawsuit against the United States known as Cobell v. Kempthorne. I want to begin by extending my thanks and great appreciation to Senator DORGAN, who is vice-chairman of the committee and will soon be its chairman in the 110th Congress, for the extraordinary, tireless effort that he and his staff have made in working on this bill over the course of the past 2 years. In accordance with a long-standing tradition of bipartisanship within the Committee on Indian Affairs, Senator DORGAN and his staff have worked hand-in-hand with me and my staff in our attempt to reform the way in which Indian trust lands and resources are managed and to settle the Cobell lawsuit.

By no means did trust reform begin with this bill. I myself have introduced similar legislation in prior Congresses, including S. 1459 in the 108th Congress; in 2004 the Congress enacted the Indian Probate Reform Act, which brought significant reforms to the laws applicable to the probate of individual Indian trust and restricted land; and 10 years before that the American Indian Trust

Fund Management Reform Act of 1994 was enacted into law, which, among other things, created the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians. While I truly believe that as a result of these and other enactments, and reform initiatives within the Department of the Interior—in part in response to court orders in the Cobell case—there have been improvements in at least some areas of trust management, we still have a very long way to go before the business of Indian trust reform is complete.

I will not even try to recount here the difficult history of the relationship between the United States and its native peoples. But I am pleased to say that the past 25 years have brought significant advancements in the lives of many Indian people as a result of better access to education, health care and housing, and because of economic development in some parts of Indian Country. However, there are still many unacceptable disparities between conditions in many Indian communities and those of non-Indian communities in this country. S. 1439 represents an attempt to address one particular component that affects the economic well-being of many Indian people: the way in which Indian trust and restricted assets—land, minerals, water, timber, crops, and the revenues derived from these resources—are managed by the United States.

The performance of the United States over the past 125 years in its capacity as trustee and manager of Indian trust and restricted lands is not something to be proud of. The policy of allotting Indian tribal lands, which had become the general Federal Indian policy in the 1880s, was one of several federal ''experiments'' in Indian matters that have had regrettable results both for the Indian tribes and for the Government. This policy of the 19th Century has come back to haunt us now in the form of fractionated ownership of allotted lands—where some parcels of land are owned by dozens, often hundreds and in some cases even over a thousand different individual Indian owners. This fractionation of ownership has led to a proliferation of individual Indian money accounts, ''IIM accounts'', which now number in the hundreds of thousands of separate accounts and many of which have very small balances and annual income, all of which the Federal Government has a trust obligation to track and manage—at considerable expense.

The staggering number of tiny fractionated interests—along with decades of mismanagement on the part of Government officials—contributed to the conditions that led to the filing of the Cobell class action here in the District of Columbia. A lot has happened in that litigation since it was filed 10 years ago, much of it reported in newspapers across the country, but I think it is fair to say that one thing the case has shown is that the United States has not lived up to its duty as a fiduciary to the thousands of Indian beneficiaries of trust lands and funds.

Between 1993 and 2006, the Committee on Indian Affairs has held at least 17 hearings on the matter of Indian trust reform or reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1994, Congress passed into law the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act, 25 U.S.C. §4001, et seq., to reform the management of Indian assets, accounts, and resources held in trust and managed by the United States. The 1994 Act was not the final word on trust reform, even in the limited context of Indian trust funds management. Two years after that Act was passed, a class action based in part on the requirements of the Act was filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia: the case of Cobell v. Babbitt—redesignated Cobell v. Norton with the appointment of Gale Norton as Secretary of Interior, and again Cobell v. Kempthorne with the appointment of Dirk Kempthorne as Secretary.

In November 2001, in response to the Cobell litigation, the Department of Interior submitted a reprogramming request to the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior and Related Agencies to establish a new ''Bureau of Indian Trust Asset Management'', BITAM, within the Department to be administered by a new appointed official, an ''Assistant Secretary—Indian Trust Asset Management.''

The BITAM proposal was very poorly received by Indian country, and soon thereafter the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies asked the Department to resubmit its reprogramming request at a later date pending further consultation and further review of the management and organization of the Department's trust program.

Over the course of 2002, the Department convened and participated in a series of consultations and other meetings with Tribal officials and representatives across the country to discuss Indian trust asset management and reform. The principal mechanism for this consultation was a ''Joint Tribal Leader/Department of Interior Task Force on Trust Reform'' composed of Tribal leaders from around the country and Department officials. The joint task force reviewed and documented trust asset management functions and processes at all levels within the Bureau, and eventually identified numerous features of the Bureau's trust system and organization that required reform. The joint task force also studied several restructuring proposals developed by Indian tribes around the country.

Ultimately, the joint task force reached an agreement in principle on a restructuring proposal that would create a new position of Under Secretary for Indian Affairs. The Under Secretary would report directly to the Secretary of Interior and have authority over all aspects of Indian affairs within the Department, including the management of tribal and individual Indian trust assets, including both financial and natural resource trust assets. Under this proposal, the Office of the Special Trustee would eventually be phased out. However, although Tribal leaders and Department officials on the task force also reached agreement on other significant matters relating to trust reform and restructuring, they were unable to agree on certain key elements of the legislative proposal. In October of 2002, the joint task force was disbanded.

Mr. President, I wish I could say that our efforts in the 109th Congress bridged all of the gaps between the Government, the tribes and individual Indians, but I cannot. That does not mean that we did not make significant progress. In the course of the past 18 to 20 months all parties have acquired a much better understanding of the issues and of each other's positions. The Committee and its staff have also acquired a better understanding and appreciation of the issues as well. Again, I want to thank Senator DORGAN for his insights, efforts, and commitment of time and staff in this truly bi-partisan effort. The majority and minority staff of the Committee on Indian Affairs met extensively with representatives of Indian tribes, tribal organizations and individual Indian organizations in an effort to get a solid understanding of what Indian country wants to get out of trust reform. The staff of both sides of the committee also met and conferred extensively with various components of the administration and representatives of the plaintiffs in the Cobell case to discuss S. 1439 and the settlement of claims in the lawsuit. I know this outreach and the information it produced will be extremely useful to this body as the Indian trust reform initiative goes forward in the 110th Congress.

One significant outcome of our efforts during this Congress is the fact that the administration made a counter-proposal in October of this year which spells out its views of what should be done to reform the management of Indian trust assets, and I am submitting a summary of that proposal along with this statement. Their proposal has four major components: consolidation of ownership of fractioned tracts within the next 10 years; a transition to beneficiary-managed ownership of trust lands within the next 10 years; resolution of tribal trust claims—in addition to individual Indian trust claims; and some limitations on the liability of the Government for claims that may arise during and after the 10 year transition period to a system of beneficiary management.

Not surprisingly, the reaction of Indian country to the administration's proposal was, for the most part, quite negative. Much of the opposition focused on the timing of the proposal: it

was made with only weeks of legislative days left in our calendar, not nearly enough time to consider, debate or even understand the far-reaching implications of the administration's ideas.

On the other hand, while many tribes and individuals criticized the proposal taken as a whole, many were not completely opposed to all aspects of the proposal and, indeed, some even agreed with certain aspects of the administration's ideas. For example, there was widespread acknowledgment that fractionated ownership of individual Indian lands has been a real, ever-worsening problem that has plagued the system for many decades—one that Indian country must confront and deal with now and not later—and that dealing with the problem will require solutions that are not altogether pleasant. And even though some commentators seemed to oppose any system of beneficiary-driven management decisions for trust lands, others recognized that the Indian tribes and Indian landowners can and will make better decisions regarding the use of their own lands than the Bureau of Indian Affairs if they are given the appropriate resources to do so. I am also submitting for the record a copy of a recent editorial that appeared in a widely read Indian periodical, Indian Country Today. The editorial suggests that certain aspects of the administration's proposals are in fact reasonable, including the idea that Indian beneficiaries will make good managers of their land, and it challenges Indian country to engage with the administration on its ideas and ''come back with an improved set of proposals based on them'' rather than just reject them out of hand.

So indeed, Mr. President, while I am disappointed that S. 1439 was not passed into law, I am also encouraged by the progress we have made in our understanding of trust management problems and in the willingness of the Indian tribes, individual Indians, representatives of the class action plaintiffs and the administration to engage in meaningful discussions on how to fix this system. I am hopeful that in the 110th Congress the Committee begins where we left off in this bill and that it will not shy away from the difficult issues of Indian trust reform.

Mr. President, I ask that the aforementioned documents be printed in the RECORD. The documents follow.

NEWLY PROPOSED PROVISIONS FOR SENATE BILL 1439 THE INDIAN TRUST REFORM ACT

Senate bill 1439, the Indian Trust Reform Act of 2005, would resolve the Cobell v. Kempthorne case and make reforms to the way the United States manages Indian trust funds and assets. The bill was introduced in July 2005 and Committee staffs have been meeting with representatives from the plaintiffs, the Administration, and Indian tribes to decide what changes, if any, should be made to the bill. This paper highlights several proposals that have come out of some of those discussions.

To gain support for a multi-billion dollar bill, it may be necessary to incorporate significant changes to the management system for Indian trust assets. As proposed, these changes would not remove the trust status of Indian lands, but would reallocate significant decision-making authority and legal responsibility from the Federal government to the Indian tribes and individuals. The proposed changes are generally described below.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee have not approved these proposed changes to S. 1439, but have asked their respective staff to seek input from Indian Country before they make a decision on these proposals and how to proceed with the bill.

Land fractionation—consolidate all 128,000 individual Indian allotments into ownership of no more than 10 individuals per tract of land within 10 years

The highly fractionated nature of many individual Indian lands has made it difficult for the United States to manage these lands and the revenues generated from them. There are currently 128,000 individual Indian allotments and 3.6 million fractionated interests. One proposal to address this issue has been to develop aggressive mechanisms to consolidate all allotments into 10 or fewer owners for each tract of land within the next 10 years.

All land would remain in Indian title with individual Indian or tribal owners.

Consolidation would include voluntary and involuntary mechanisms, but large interest owners would have a first opportunity to buy out the smaller interest owners would have a first opportunity to buy out the smaller interest owners before an entire tract is put up for sale to either the tribe or a member of that tribe.

Consolidation of tracts with 100 or more owners would be prioritized.

Funding for the proposed consolidation mechanisms would be assured by inclusion in the funding levels of the bill.

Beneficiary-managed trust—transition of all individual Indian and tribal land to a beneficiary-managed trust system within 10 years

After fractionated lands are consolidated, it is proposed to convert the current management system for all individual Indian and tribal land into a new system within a 10 year timeframe. The lands would remain in trust and not be subject to taxation, but the individual or tribal owner of the lands would have most of the privileges and responsibilities of property management.

The landowners would make nearly all decisions on land use within certain broad parameters.

All revenues generated from the land would go directly to the landowners (direct pay).

The landowners would negotiate their own long-tern leases and land use agreements, without Secretarial approval.

The BIA would provide ''management'' financial support and technical assistance during a transition period to assist owners in becoming efficient property owners and managers.

The federal government would remain responsible for: preventing involuntary alienation of land; approving transfers of land title; maintaining land title records; and probating trust estates.

Resolution of tribal claims related to the mismanagement of trust funds, lands and resources

In addition to resolving all individual Indian claims related to the United States' mismanagement of trust funds, lands and resources, it has been proposed to resolve all tribal claims for the same matters. Possible suggestions for addressing this issue include:

All mismanagement claims for tribal monies, lands, and resources would be resolved and settled.

A settlement fund would be established and each tribe would receive a distribution based on a formula that would take into account the amount of land a tribe owns and the amount of revenues that were generated from that land for a specified period of time.

All historical accounting claims against the United States would be settled.

Account balances for Indian trust accounts would be deemed accurate as of the date of passage of Senate bill 1439.

The bill would not settle takings claims for land or related resources, claims to establish the right to possess or the ownership of tribal land, or claims arising under Federal environmental laws.

Limitation on liability of the United States during and after transition period

In order to facilitate the proposed reforms, it has also been proposed that during the period of time for land consolidation and transition of the trust management system into a beneficiary-managed trust there would be some limitations on the liability of the United States in regard to the management of trust resources.

After the transition period, the Federal government would remain responsible for correcting errors, but without damage claims against the government for its residual responsibilities.

[From Washington Watch, Nov. 30, 2006]

TRUST FUNDS SETTLEMENT SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO THE FOSSIL RECORD

The Individual Indian Money trust remains a troubled realm, and it is likely to stay that way well into the next Congress.

Indian country was right to reject the case settlement concepts offered by the administration. But as spelled out by the next Senate Committee on Indian Affairs chairman, Sen. Byron Dorgan, D–N.D., failure to resolve the IIM litigation ''overhangs everything else'' in federal Indian affairs, on the funding front above all.

That overhang, 10 years in the making, isn't likely to get any less severe under a Democratic Congress over the next couple of years. Another leading figure on the issue, Sen. John McCain, R–Ariz., has stated outright that he will not vote for a bill to settle the IIM litigation if it does not also settle as many subsidiary trust claims as may be possible. He wants a ''whole'' settlement, in contrast to an IIM-only settlement that would be considered ''partial.'' As a Republican of high stock right now and a probable presidential candidate in 2008, McCain's views will take many lawmakers along with him.

So for now, any hope of an IIM-only, ''partial'' settlement is out.

So is any hope of the huge settlement described as fair by the IIM plaintiff class. Remember, the litigation itself is only about an accounting. When the frail pages of the lawsuit are found among other fossils many centuries from now, they may show that a court has ''settled'' the mismanaged accounts for a larger sum than the government will agree to, left to its own devices. But the government can litigate for decades yet at a cost still light-years from the settlement figure(s) the plaintiffs have initiated.

The starting figure of $176 billion, though never actually sought, was off-putting; $27.5 billion proved another non-starter; $13 billion also struck the administration as unrealistic; $8 billion to $9 billion, considered a reasonable ''rough justice'' number by the SCIA, might have been reachable two years or so ago, but now the administration considers a much lower figure justice enough.

Nonetheless, according to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, it is willing to invest ''billions'' in a kind of omnibus bill on trust claims. The key verb is not ''to settle'' or ''to reimburse'' but ''to invest,'' and in the short term there is no getting around it.

Indian country should engage with the administration's case settlement concepts, then, and come forward with an improved set of proposals based on them.

It's a steep order, but the case settlement concepts do provide some footholds. For starters:

The administration foresees ''voluntary and involuntary'' mechanisms for consolidating fractionated lands. Given the history here, the concept of an involuntary taking of land to be consolidated is troublesome, to say the least. But assuming economic use is the goal of consolidation, there is no other way. Land tracts with hundreds of owners cannot be managed for profit, period. Consolidation that requires consent from all owners is impossible for many reasons. Tribes should be able to propose sensible limits on involuntary consolidation mechanisms that don't also torpedo the purposes of consolidation.

The administration foresees a ''beneficiary managed trust'' that would grow the trust estate. This was dangerous at the time of the Dawes Severalty Act, a century and some years ago, but nowadays it simply isn't a new concept. In fact, it's a solid, tested concept that can help prosperity along by goading individuals and tribes toward the aggressive management of their own resources. After a 10-year period for technical assistance as financed in the law itself, individuals would manage their own lease property, with payments going direct to individuals instead of being lightened along the way by the government. The original trust funds reform law of 1994 foresaw every bit of that. But the government would still fulfill vital residual roles, maintaining the land as inalienably tribal land, in trust and tax-exempt, as well as probating estates, correcting errors in the accounts, transferring titles and keeping title records. A proposal like this should not be rejected with outrage, but embraced with care. Again, tribes can certainly offer proposals for the longer-term protection of their more vulnerable members.

Tribes have especially reviled the idea of limits on federal liability, should IIM beneficiaries choose to manage their own lands. But already, the U.S. Supreme Court has established limits on federal liability in cases where statutory language does not assign liability. Tribes should be willing to propose strictly limited statutory language that assigns certain modified federal liabilities, but without going so far as to convince McCain and company that the settlement is therefore ''partial.''

Tribes also seem to despise the idea of an alteration in the trust relationship. But Elouise Cobell, lead plaintiff in the IIM case, suggests the same and then some every time she declares the IIM trust should be taken from Interior and placed in receivership. This could never be done because no bank could responsibly take on the liabilities, but if it were done it would profoundly alter the trust relationship. So let's alter it already, not through receivership but by participating and directing. It really is too important to be left to lawyers and individuals.

Finally, tribes have objected to the idea that tribal claims should be included in any settlement that approaches the $8 billion range. But the guessing here is that if tribes genuinely got behind a ''whole'' settlement at some realistic cost, providing their own serious counterproposals with a minimum of posturing, billions more might be found.●

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH REFORM ACT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to acknowledge a very important deed this body has accomplished prior to the conclusion of the 109th Congress. Despite some incredible obstacles and limited time we have succeeded in protecting real health insurance coverage for low-income, working Americans.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, which I am proud to have helped establish in 1997, has made a difference in expanding health insurance coverage to low-income children around this country. In previous years, Congress has stood up for low-income children and produced the additional funding necessary to keep the SCHIP program running. A number of states are again facing urgent shortfalls in their SCHIP allotments in fiscal year 2007. I was deeply disappointed when the tax extenders package did not include, as expected, a modest proposal to help those states facing immediate shortfalls in their SCHIP budgets.

Not so long ago, Rhode Island could proudly claim it had the lowest rate of uninsured children in the country. The latest Census Bureau report is now showing a different picture—the number of uninsured children rose a full percentage point, from 5.8 percent to 6.8 percent from 2004 to 2005. My state has worked hard over the past decade to build a children's health insurance program that has become a model for the nation. Yet, Rhode Island is anticipated to be the first of several states in a funding shortfall next year. Specifically, my state is facing a $43 million shortfall and will have only 32 percent of the funding necessary to sustain SCHIP in 2007. These dollars mean the difference between thousands of children, pregnant women, and families getting access to health care or not getting the care they need at all.

Included with the reauthorization of the National Institutes of Health, NIH, is a modest bipartisan proposal to defer the shortfalls that would negatively impact the SCHIP program in my state as well as several others. This additional time is needed to work on a more permanent solution to the chronic shortfalls and other structural issues that should be addressed in the context of SCHIP reauthorization next year.

I would be remiss if I did not extend my sincere gratitude to the Democratic leader, Senator HARRY REID, and his staff, particularly Kate Leone, for their understanding, tenacity, and tireless effort in making this possible. I would also like to thank my colleague from Montana, Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member MAX BAUCUS, and his staff for all of their hard work in putting together a carefully crafted stopgap measure, and I look forward to working with him on the equally challenging task of SCHIP reauthorization next year.

In the waning hours of the 109th Congress, we have taken a small but important step to maintain our commitment to America's children.

END OF THE 109TH CONGRESS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as the 109th Congress wraps up its final session, I want to note my disappointment that the current leadership decided not to work on all 10 of the appropriations bills that remain undone. Congress is adjourning and walking away with much of our work incomplete.

It is irresponsible and wrong. We should have stayed and made the tough decisions to get the appropriations done. The Federal budget is due October 1. We missed that deadline, as we have often in recent years. The leadership adjourned for the elections, and when we returned the leadership lacked the will and determination to finish the appropriations bill. Many individuals Senators, including me, would have stayed and worked hard to get the job done. But we were overridden.

Failure to enact the appropriations in a timely manner hurts programs because administrators cannot plan and they cannot hire staff in a timely manner. This can create real problems in our VA hospitals, our Head Start agencies and the clinics funded by the Maternal and child health block grant.

This year, instead of doing our work, the congressional leaders are punting the tough budget decisions into the next year and the next Congress. On February 15, 2007, when the continuing resolution, CR, expires, agencies will have been operating for 4½ months under a CR which represents more than a third of the fiscal year. This imposes burdens and hardships on the people that our agencies of Government serve. It is failure of leadership.

The Coalition of Human Needs has done some estimates about these cuts and their effects since 2002. Their analysis highlights that over time 72 programs of direct services have been cut when inflation is considered. Inflation erodes buying power over time, and it makes a stark difference in what services needy children and families receive. The coalition reports that 35 programs were cut by 10 percent or more, including essential programs like family violence, maternal and child health block grant, and Even Start, the early education component of Head Start. Such cuts are harsh and, in my view, shortsighted. Investments in our children's health care and education are downpayments for our future.

Housing programs, economic development investments in water and sewer projects, and basic funding for local law enforcement, along with a host of other programs will be put on hold for the next 9 weeks. I wish this were not the case, but sadly it is.

My hope for the new Congress and the new leadership is that we will get the job done. I am proud to note that the leaders for the 110th Congress, which begins on January 4, 2007, have